

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 24662 020701Z

17

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 SY-05

MCT-01 IO-13 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 TRSE-00 /079 W

----- 080713

R 020620Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2846

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, TH

SUBJECT: SECURITY AT BANGKOK'S DON MUANG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

REF: (A) STATE 212490; (B) BANGKOK 22999

1. EMBOFFS HAVE DELIVERED AIDE-MEMOIRE TO MFA
EMPHASIZING POINTS RAISED IN PARA 1 AND 2 OF REFTTEL
(A), AND DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC DIVISION, SAWANIT KONGSIRI. RTG HAS NOT
REPEAT NOT RATIFIED EITHER 1970 HAGUE OR 1971
MONTREAL CONVENTION, BUT SAWANIT PROMISED TO LOOK
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 24662 020701Z

INTO THE MATTER.

2. EMBOFF HAS CONDUCTED PERSONAL, ON-SITE SECURITY INVESTIGATION AT BANGKOK'S DON MUANG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, AND HAS DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH LOCAL ICAO AND AIRLINE REPS. SECURITY AT DON MUANG IS A FARCE, AND EMBASSY AGREES WITH ONE AIRLINE EXPERT WHO SAID, "ANY TERRORIST WHO WANTS TO COME IN WOULD HAVE A FIELD DAY." EMBOFF PERSONALLY ENTERED SUPPOSEDLY SECURE DEPARTURE LOUNGE THREE REPEAT THREE SEPARATE TIMES WITHOUT SHOWING IDENTIFICATION OR BEING CHALLENGED. HE ALSO NOTICED THAT ANYONE WEARING A UNIFORM -- CREW, STAFF, MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, ETC. -- WANDERED ABOUT AT WILL, WITH OR WITHOUT ID PASS. ICAO AND AIRLINE REPS CONFIRMED THAT ALMOST ANYONE MAY GO PRACTICALLY ANYWHERE AT DON MUANG, INCLUDING DEPARTURE AND TRANSIT LOUNGES, AND WILL RARELY IF EVER BE ASKED TO PRODUCE THE REQUIRED PASS. RECENT RETURN TO THAILAND OF FIELD MARSHAL PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIAN (SEE REFTEL B) ILLUSTRATES THIS POINT VERY WELL. PRAPHAT WAS MET AT PLANESIDE BY AN UNMARKED CAR AND WHISKED AWAY TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION. HE NEVER PASSED THROUGH IMMIGRATION OR CUSTOMS.

3. TRANSIT AND DEPARTURE LOUNGES ADJOIN EACH OTHER. UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO, PASSENGERS IN THESE LOUNGES COULD MOVE BACK AND FORTH THROUGH A SET OF DOUBLE GLASS DOORS. THESE DOORS ARE NOW LOCKED, SO ACCESS TO TRANSIT LOUNGE FROM DEPARTURE LOUNGE, AND VICE VERSA, HAS BEEN STOPPED. HOWEVER, TRANSIT PASSENGERS RECEIVE MINIMAL, IF ANY, SCREENING BOTH INTO AND OUT OF THE LOUNGE. AT PRESENT, ALL HAND-LUGGAGE INSPECTION AND METAL DETECTOR CHECKS ON PASSENGERS ARE CONDUCTED BY THE AIRLINES THEMSELVES. DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL AVIATION (DCA), WHICH CONTROLS CIVIL AVIATION AT DON MUANG, HAS NO FUNDS FOR SUCH SECURITY MEASURES.

4. CONSENSUS AMONG AIRLINE PEOPLE IN BANGKOK SEEMS TO BE THAT DON MUANG IS "RIPE" FOR A TERRORIST ATTACK. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 24662 020701Z

SOME OF THOSE CONTACTED WERE SURPRISED THAT ONE HAD NOT ALREADY OCCURRED.

5. RTG AND DCA HAVE NOT BEEN CONTACTED ABOUT FAA SECURITY TRAINING PROGRAM, AS MENTIONED IN REFTEL (A), PARA 5. PANAM REP BELIEVES THAI AUTHORITIES WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED. IF DEPARTMENT WISHES, EMBASSY WILL CONTACT DCA ON THIS MATTER.

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